



Ref: 06/59

2 May 2006

## **Karus Therapeutics appoints Simon Kerry as CEO**

Karus Therapeutics, an emerging biotechnology company and University of Southampton spinout, focused on developing innovative therapeutics to treat cancer and heart disease, has announced the appointment of Simon Kerry as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Simon joins Karus from a senior business development position with a European biotech company, where he achieved an enviable track-record of successful deal-making:

'I joined Karus because the company's therapeutic platform is exciting and the scientists are leading experts in their field,' he said. 'An important factor in Karus's success is the collaborative effort between chemists, biologists and clinicians. Our work at Karus is expected to play an important role in tackling cancer, heart disease and inflammation.'

After graduating from Loughborough University with a life-science PhD and an MBA, Simon's CV has included over ten years in senior business development posts at several biotech companies both in the UK and Europe, including Active Biotech (Lund, Sweden) and Ablynx (Ghent, Belgium).

Karus Therapeutics was created in July 2005 when Dr A Ganesan from the University's School of Chemistry, cancer scientist Dr Graham Packham and cardiac biologist Dr Paul Townsend from the University's School of Medicine joined forces to develop novel drugs known as histone deacetylase (HDAC) inhibitors.

There is already intense interest in the pharmaceutical industry around HDAC inhibitors, which can slow abnormal cell growth, can cause controlled cell death and/or correct abnormal cell differentiation in tumours. The next generation products being developed by Karus are expected to be safer and more potent than their predecessors.

Guiding Karus's innovative research is a recently formed Scientific Advisory Board comprising key opinion leaders from three continents, including: Dr Chris Larson (Kemia Inc, San Diego), Professor Peter Johnson (University of Southampton), Professor Minoru Yoshida (Japanese Riken Institute) and Dr Tony Raynham (Cancer Research Technology development laboratory, London).

Karus Therapeutics received £750,000 at its formation, a record level of joint seedcorn funding from IP2IPO, the early stage technology transfer specialists, and the SULIS fund, a seed fund owned by the Universities of Southampton, Bath and Bristol. At the time, it was the 15th company to be spun out of the University of Southampton since 2000, two of which have already listed on the London Stock Exchange.

Ends

### **Notes for editors**

The University of Southampton is a leading UK teaching and research institution with a global reputation for research and scholarship. One of the UK's top 10 research universities, it offers first-rate opportunities and facilities for study and research across a wide range of subjects in humanities, health, science and engineering, and has a strong enterprise agenda. The University has nearly 20,000 students and 5000 staff based across its campuses in Southampton and Winchester. Its annual turnover is in the region of £274 million.

The University is one of the country's top institutions for engineering, computer science and medicine. It is home to a range of world-leading research centres, including the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton, the Institute of Sound and Vibration Research, the Optoelectronics Research Centre, the Centre for the Developmental Origins of Health and Disease, and the Mountbatten Centre for International Studies.

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